Understanding SafeAssign Reports
A Guide for Students

Acknowledgements to Chemeketa Community College Tech Hub

Provided by Technology Across the Curriculum (TAC)
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What is SafeAssign?
SafeAssign is a tool within Blackboard that helps you check your papers to make sure your sources are properly quoted and cited.

How SafeAssign Works
You submit papers to a SafeAssignment that your instructor creates in Blackboard. The content of the papers is compared to websites, online journals and other student papers in the SafeAssign system. The software generates a report that highlights passages in the paper that match the SafeAssign sources. Instructors also review the reports to validate that sources are correctly cited.

Please note: It can take hours for SafeAssign to generate reports during peak usage times (e.g., at the end of the term).

Interpreting SafeAssign Reports
It’s important that you understand how to read the reports so you can make sure your sources are correctly cited and take any action, if needed, to avoid unintended plagiarism.

SafeAssign reports contain 3 main sections:
1. General information about the paper
2. A list of suspected sources (if any)
3. The paper’s text

General Information

The top left section of the report shows the student name, file name, and percentage of likelihood that content in the paper that matches other sources.

Be careful when interpreting the "Matching" score. It’s important to remember that this percentage includes passages that are properly quoted and cited, as well as those that are plagiarized. There’s no way to tell from the percentage alone whether there is plagiarism in the paper.
Suspected Sources

- The list of sources includes sources for matching content in your paper that are properly cited and sources you did not cite, but should have.
- Some sources you may have never even looked at may appear on this list. This is because some Websites re-use content that’s published on other Websites.
- Click on each Suspected Source to see the full corresponding text.
  Note: This list only shows sources that match your paper’s content; it’s not a definitive ruling on whether or not your paper contains plagiarism.

Paper Text
The “Paper Text” section contains the actual text from your paper.

Text in black font does not match any other content; it is original. Formatting such as bold and double-spacing does not show up in the report.

Text in blue font matches text identified in the Suspected Sources section; this is what you need to check. The green numbers next to the blue passages correspond to a specific source.

To check your paper for plagiarism all you need to do is review each section in blue font, and add quotations and citations, if needed. You may need to revise your paraphrasing. See the next section (“About Paraphrasing”) for more details.
About Paraphrasing
If you want to use another author’s ideas in your paper without adding direct quotes, you should know that there are wrong ways and right ways to do this.

Wrong: Borrow a source’s sentence structure and just swap key words out with synonyms.

Right: Read the source, understand it fully, and then present its ideas completely in your own words and voice. Even when you place a source’s idea in your own words, you need a citation to give credit where it is due and to help your readers track down your sources.

What if your SafeAssign report shows a match?

- If your word-for-word quotes have quotation marks and citations, do nothing. Your paper is fine.
- If your word-for-word passage is not quoted and cited, add quotation marks and proper citation.
- Are you paraphrasing? Be sure your paraphrasing reflects your own writing style and your understanding of the author’s concepts. Add a citation (quotation marks are not needed).

Student Access to SafeAssign Reports
It is up to your instructor whether or not s/he makes SafeAssign reports visible to students. For SafeAssignments with viewable reports, click the View/Complete link on the SafeAssignment you uploaded your paper to:

One report is generated for each SafeAssignment. SafeAssign does not allow multiple attempts.

If your instructor does not make SafeAssign reports viewable for some reason, there is a Blackboard site called Plagiarism Prevention that has draft SafeAssignments you can use to submit a paper and review a SafeAssign report.

You can access it from the Community tab in Blackboard. Enter “plagiarism” in the Organization Search box, then enroll yourself in the Plagiarism Prevention site. Once you are in the site you
will see a section called Draft SafeAssignments that you can use to upload a paper and view its report.

**Where to Go for More Help**

If you have questions about your SafeAssign report, or if you have concerns about whether you are correctly quoting and citing your sources, check with your instructor.

- OSU’s Libraries and [Writing Center](#) help students with writing and research.
- Ecampus offers [tutoring and writing support for their students](#).
- More tips for OSU students on [writing, paraphrasing, and citing sources](#) are available online.